

HUMBLE ASPIRATIONS

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1907

BY

THOM. HEATHMAN





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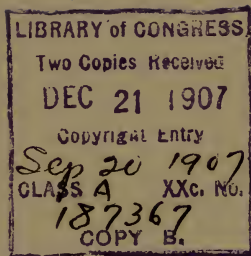
Thom. Heathman



PUBLISHED BY
BYRON S. ADAMS
WASHINGTON, D. C.,

1907

PS 3515
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*Sincerely,
Thom.*

DEDICATED
WITH MUCH AFFECTION
TO
MY MOTHER

Introductory.

ARMSTRONG MANUAL TRAINING SCHOOL,
P St., Between 1st and 3d Sts., N. W.
W. B. EVANS, *Principal*.

MR. THOMAS HEATHMAN,
Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR HEATHMAN: As I wish your little book of poems God-speed, I am reminded of the rare literary taste and efficiency which you exhibited as a lad and of which this little collection is a flowering out. Your monetary profit may not be great—seldom is it or has it been for any who have gone before you—but you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have filled your life and the lives of those whom your life has touched with a deeper and more lasting sweetness than would have been possible had the songs which follow in these pages remained unsung.

Sincerely and gratefully yours,

W. B. EVANS.

October 15, 1907.

My Prayer.

Thou who dwells beyond the sky,
Send Thy light into my soul;
On Thy love do I rely—
Make my broken spirit whole.

Let me be the thing I would,
Let me tread the paths untrod,
Let me do some earthly good,
Let me worship Thee, O God.

In Thy gospel I have read,
“ ’Tis not in this life to grieve”;
There too Thou hast sweetly said,
“Ask it and thou shalt receive.”

Light the taper of my life,
Let it slowly burn away.
Lift me out of toil and strife
Nearer unto Thee I pray.

Fill me with morality
That my work be naught for wrong,
That with sweet humility
I may sing my simple song.

And the world that hears it read
May with meaning sentence say,
“Though the song be poorly said,
Time has not been thrown away.”

Sorrow.

When thy heart is filled with longing
For some loved one far away ;
When the gloom within thy bosom
Deepens with the closing day,
When the smile flits from thy features
Leaving them so darkly clad,
Thou would's't say in silent whispers,
 "I am sad."

What is sadness? Can'st thou answer?
Ah, I fear thou dost not know—
Thine has been a life of freedom,
Thine a heart bereft of woe.
Sorrow cometh not in snatches
Banished with a slight request,
Once admitted, long 'twill linger
 In thy breast.

A Lullaby.

Let us sail together
O'er the dark blue sea,—
Baby won't be frightened
Mother is with thee.
She will hold you tightly
O'er the briny main;
We will glide to Dreamland
Then glide back again.

Shut your eyes, my darling—
Tight as tight can be
Into sweetest slumber;
Mother is with thee
Sandman will not harm thee
He has passed, you know.
O'er the sea together
You and I will go.

Softly drop the curtains
Over baby's eyes;
Softly smile the starlings
In the evening skies;—
Baby soon will waken,
Smiling still with glee
We have glided home again,
Baby dear and me.

The Upward Path.

Thou path that leads toward the sky,
I linger on thee, tell me pray,
Should I ascend thy slope so high—
Would I e'er reach the "Land of Day"?
Sing on sweet bird and charm my ear
With warblings from the Land above,
That when the Gates of God draw near,
My heart shall leap with Godly Love.

I'm growing weary, day by day;
I must prepare to climb thy height;
And liv'ried in my blest array
Must leave this land of sin and night.
At that sad time, oh, "Path of Fate."
Oh, when I leave this dreary shore,
This land of sin and pride and hate
I'll linger on thee nevermore.
But stand to hear my Lord's decree;
'Twill be a smile, or else a frown.
Shall mine be joy or misery?—
Shall I ascend or grovel down?

Emotion.

Do let me sit still longer,
The world has lost it's mirth ;
I have left this realm of sadness,
I am no more of earth.

Oh, how I dread the moment
When I shall wake again
And find that I still linger
In this vale of grief and pain.

My heart is wrapped in the mystery
Of music, soft and sweet ;
My soul is lost in a valley
Which makes it's joy complete.
Can this be earthly feeling?
Can this be worldly mirth?
Ah, no, it lifts my sorrows,
It can not be of earth !

When God gave man his talents
And they have so been sown
To raise my thoughts to Heaven
Where those I love have flown,
My heart ekes out it's sorrow,
My cares, my griefs all flee,
And I feel that this Heavenly music
Is only played for me.

But alas ! must I be selfish?
Ah no, that can not be !
My very soul is spreading,
I'm wrapped in ecstasy !
I wake with an anxious tremble
From this angelic dream,
And I touch my enamored companion
That we both may enjoy the theme.

Daddy's Darlin'.

Cheeks ez red ez roses,
Dimples jist ez deep;
Yo' sho' is a pictur'
When you is asleep.
Oh, you cunnin' rascal
Come right hyeah to me—
You is jist ez pretty
Ez a chile kin be.

Eyes ez bright ez di'monds,
Haih jest all a curl;
Come to pappy darlin'
Aint you pappy's girl?
All yo' li'l crowin's
Jest sets pappy wile;
Pappy'd jest go crazy
'Dout dis lubly chile.

Hug yo' daddy, puddin'
Tight ez you kin hug.
Gin yo' daddy one sweet kiss,
You's ma kissin' bug.
How much does you lub me—
Bushel an' a peck?
Wrap yo' li'l chubby arms
Round yo' daddy's neck.

Stan' all loney. honey,
Le' me see you walk;
Oh, my goodness g'acious
How dis chile kin talk!
Less us go fin' mammy;
Wonder whar she's at—
Dinah, hyeah me callin' you?
Come an' git yo' brat.

Lor's I'se most nigh late for wo'k,
How de time do fly.
Shake a day-day puddin';
Good-bye, hon, bye, bye!

Memories.

Slowly the day is waning
And slowly darkness falls ;
From o'er the meadow and anon
The drowsy cricket calls.
Far out upon the landscape
With greedy gaze I stare ;
It seems I see remembrances
Serenely written there.

'Twas there my days of childhood
So happily were spent ;
'Twas there I frolicked daily,
In childhood's joys content ;
'Twas there my dear, old daddy
Oft laid the furrows wide ;
'Twas there I oft did follow him
In simple, childish pride.

'Twas there by dear, old mammy
Our daddy's lunch would bring ;
'Twas there I heard my sister's voice
In happy accents ring
Across the field of cabbage
And o'er the meadow corn,
As sweetly, clearly she would sing,
"On That Celestial Morn."

And there my baby brother,
The sweetest 'mong us all,
Would laugh and crow and prattle,
And pitch the sand and crawl.
Ah, sweetest of all memories,
The days that now are flown!
Ah, could I call them back again
And hold them for my own!

Yet I am happy ever
While memory has power
To seize the fields still fresh and green
And hold them for an hour;
To bring my childish fancies back,
To drive away dark sorrow,
That I may sleep away my cares
And wake refreshed tomorrow.

Contentment.

There is a soothing something,
I know not what it be,
That dwells within my bosom
And whispers tenderly
Of better days approaching.
What is it—can you guess?
It can not be a harbinger
Announcing happiness.

Life.

A dream of the laurels we hope to win
A disappointment, a sigh, and then
A smile and a dream of laurels again;
These are the seeds of Life.

A pause in the midst of the darkest night,
A vain endeavor,—a spark of light,
A sad repulsion—a sorry plight,
These are the flowers of Life.

A struggle for riches, a fight for gain,
A struggle, a fight—and both in vain,
A failure as black as the “Curse of Cain”;
These are the fruits of Life.

A saddened heart, a thought of God,
A prayer, a beck, a smile, a nod,
A short farewell to the paths we trod;
These make the harvest of Life.

The Singer and the Song.

I heard him sing a song of *peace*,
A song, serenely sweet ;
He knew naught of the thrill he sent
Into my heart, so widely rent
In twain, with sadness sorely pent
Between it's tender cords.

I heard him sing a song of *war*,
That stirred my very soul ;
He sang of heroes, strong and brave,
Who fought, their country's cause to save ;
And left to us the honored grave
That we who *live* must love.

I heard him sing a song of *love*,
And, ah, 'twas sad indeed ;
It ran, "My dearest, when I'm dead,
Place on the tombstone o'er my head
In letters that are plainly read,
'One mortal, gone to seed.' "

I never heard him sing again.
Alas ! and yet I long
That ere my life shall ebb away,
That ere I meet my final day,
From out his bosom, I may hear him say
Another song.

Mistaken Confidence.

Well, I'm in a fix sho',
I dunno what ter do ;
I tol' de deacon sho'ly
Dat I'se gwine to ma'y Sue.
Now I 'spect he think it funny,
As any one would 'spose
Fer me to tell him sich a thing
Afore I had p'oposed.

But I tho't sho' dat gal would 'cept me
When I axed her fo' her h'art,
But she cut me up so quickly
Dat I made a sudden dart
An' went right th'ough de winder,
An' tuk de sash an' all ;
An' I was so weak when I got home
Dat I sprawled right out in de hall.

I'll tell yo' jist what happened,
Da was a awful time ;
I begun dat conversation
Jist as de clock struck nine.
Sez I, "Sue, I lub yo' dearly
And I wants yo' fo' ma wife ;
An' I'll always make yo' cheerly,
An' I'll lub yo' all ma life.

"I'se been visitin' you 'bout six years
An' I thinks I plainly see
Dat ef any body's fer yo'
It sho'ly must be me.

Now I begs yo' Sue, to answer ;
Fo' Law's sake don't say 'No'—
Ca'se ef yo' dare 'efuse me
I dunno whar I'll go.

"I'se brung yo' heap o' possums
From Deacon Jones's farm
And I stole 'em too, you know it,
Ob course it war no harm.
You mudder tol' me yistidy
Dat ef I lub yo' dear
She wouldn't mind us ma'ying
And she'd gib us de big arm chair.

"But yo' fadder, he's ve'y funny
And he thinks so much ob you
Dat he axed, 'Is dat de burly chap,
What wants to ma'y Sue?
I wouldn't gib him dat dere gal
No more'n I would a mouse,
An' I'm great a min' to mall his head
Fo' comin' to dis house.' "

Den Sue spoke up and sez she, "Sam,
I tell yo' right hyeah now,
Ef pappy say I can't do it,
I can't do it, so dah."
Den I felt like a ring-tail goat
What's jist butt down a fence ;
And I reached around,
And grabbed ma hat
And I haint been back dar sence.

Class Song.

NORMAL SCHOOL NO. 2—1903.

'Tis hard to think that we must part,
Oh, classmates, ever dear;
We are the patient sowers
Who've toiled sincerely here.
But now's the time for harvest,
Let's pluck the ripened grain;
And then go forth, beloved ones,
To sow and reap again.
And then go forth, beloved ones,
To sow and reap again.

'Tis with a throb we say, "Farewell,"
A throb of heartfelt pain—
Our very souls are weeping
Beneath the awful strain!
Oh, may we carry with us
Remembrances e'er sweet;
Some thoughts that live forever
And make our joy complete.
Some thoughts that live forever
And make our joy complete.

Our hearts abound with sadness now,
Oh, Alma Mater true—
The ties at last must sever
That bind us close to you.
Now sadly we must utter
A long, a strange "Adieu"—
Farewell, sweet Alma Mater,
Farewell, farewell to you.
Farewell, sweet Alma Mater,
Farewell, farewell to you.

I Wonder.

When mother sings to baby
As once she sang to me,
I wonder if he's happy
As then I used to be.
I wonder if the angels come
To hover o'er his head
And build a little Paradise
Around his tiny bed.

I wonder why my Mother
Is filled with so much joy
As in his little trundle bed
She lays her baby boy.
I wonder if that baby,
So sweet, so cute, so grand,
Will fill my Mother's heart with pride
When he becomes a man.

I wonder if his life-road
Be rough or smooth to tread.
I wonder if he'll be revered
Long after he is dead.
I wonder when the graces
Shall read his life decree
If he shall choose within himself
"To be or not to be."

I've wondered many strange things
About our little pet;
There is another wonder,
The greatest wonder yet.
When Mother sings to baby
As of yore she used to do,
I wonder if that baby
Has not been wond'ring too.

Virtue Versus Vice.

"Avaunt thee, Spirit of Disgrace!"
A hollow echo shouted—
"Avaunt?" the spirit echoed back,
"'Tis thee that should be routed.
In my dominion I hold sway,
'Tis now thy time to waver;
Dost thou not know my mission, Sir,
And see'st thou not my saber?"

"'Tis with this blade my realm is won,
This arm was made to conquer.
Where e'er my deadly blade indents,
The rank incise grows ranker
Until it eats an inward path
And round the heart doth center;
Then builds it up a battlement
That Virtue may not enter."

The second spirit bowed in thought
It's head of hoary beauty,
And trembled as it whispered low,
"Mine is a meagre duty;
Outside your battlement I stand—
My saddened heart demented—
I sprinkle hyssop, myrrh, absinthie,
Until the air is scented.

"Then straightway from your conquered realm
Ere long your servants wander.
They smell the fragrant, scented air
And straightway pause and ponder.
Their brains no tokens will submit,
Their eyes grow wild, dilated:
There is not left a meaning thought,
Their courage is abated.

"Fear has usurped their troubled souls,
Dim grows the flame of power—
'Who is this fearful foe,' they ask,
'That would our hearts devour?'
'Come friends, in peace we enter here,
No evil thought we nurture.'
And lo! they gaze with bated breath,
The conquerer is *Virtue*."

The Secret.

Why dost thou blush, sweet maiden,
Why dost thou droop thine eyes?
I fear I know thy secret,
If only by surmise.
Look up, thou must not waver,
Thou'rt blessed from Heaven above;
Thy modesty betrays thee—
Thou'rt in love.

Success.

Rough and thorny is the way
That we all must travel ;
Push ahead with firm intent,
Kick aside the gravel.
Never waver on the road
If one time you stumble ;
Hold your banner firmly forth
Exalted and yet humble.

Pricked may be your flesh and sore,
Sad your heart and troubled ;
Steeper may the incline seem,
Hardships may be doubled ;
But if calmly striving on
Bearing toil and sorrow,
When to-day has passed away
Light will shine to-morrow.

Though the bruises on your foot
May deface and numb it,
Onward, forward, upward strive
Till you reach the summit ;
Then with firm and steady grip,
Though the sight be grewsome,
Seize the trophy you have won,
Press it to your bosom.

Class Poem.

Normal School, '03.

If my heart were strangely gifted,
I would sing my song alone
And thou would'st not find me ling'ring,
Bending low before thy throne.

Thou, oh, Muse of Song Hued Verses,
Thou canst aid me with thy power;
Lead me to the running waters,
Let me linger for an hour
Where the waves of genius ripple,
Where the lyric poets dwell
Where my heart may be inspired
That my story be told well.

And the muse with voice so tender
Said, "Pour out thy tale to me;
Whether thy fate be sad or joyful
I shall tell it all to thee."
And I straight began my story
Of two years of joy and strife;
How we entered on our mission,
Hearts aglow, with hopes all rife.

Then I numbered all our trials,
All our griefs, our joys and more,
How we taught the little children
As they ne'er were taught before.

And the muse from out her bosom
Drew a vial of bloody red;
Held it high above her stature
Shook it well and softly said,
"As a type then, as an image
Be to us this fiery juice,
Of the wonders that frail mortals
Can with steadfast will produce.

"Let us from the brimming goblet
Drain the troubled flood with mirth;
Art is but a gift from heaven
Borrowed from the glow of earth.

"Even strength's dominions boundless,
'Neath her rule obedient lie,
From the old, the new she fashions
With creative energy;
And rejoiceth all the senses,
And in every sorrowing breast
Poureth hope's refreshing balsam
And on Life bestows new zest.

"My advice to thee, oh pilgrim,
On the threshold of Life's road,
In the sphere to which thou'rt suited
Thou shouldst take thy long abode;
And success will sure o'ertake thee."
But no sooner had she spoke
Then I yawned and stretched and shivered
"Woe is me"! and then I awoke.

But today we come to bid you
From our hearts a sad farewell.
Tell me, when we are departed
And our friends the story tell
Of the anxious hours enfathomed
When unravelling our decree
Wilt thou send a kindly impulse
Toward the "Class of 1903"?

May we leave a glowing record,
One that hearts would throb to tell,
One that calleth forth this sentence,
"They have done their duty well."

Farewell, all ye walks of schooldays,
Farewell all ye tutors true,
To our anxious classmates, farewell!
And dear friends, farewell to you.

We must enter on a mission
That shall bring us joy or shame;
May we climb the slimy ladder
Leading us to truth and fame.

May we all meet there together,
See each other face to face,
Win our crown and in our duty
Raise aloof our noble race.

Contemplation.

The fleecy snow lay on the ground
As pure as pure can be ;
Reflections of the clean and chaste
It brings again to me.
I look upon it dimly,
Admire it's mingled flakes,
And as I gaze it's expanse,
A thought of sin awakes.

I mark it as a pure soul,
So fleecy, so serene ;
Now, as a sin creeps forward
A darkened spot is seen.
It spreads, it grows still larger,
It slowly eats it's way
Till finally it conquers—
And now it holds full sway.

How many dark spots hover
Around your soul today?
How many prayers are uttered
To drive those spots away?
Implore God's blessings ever
And from prayer never cease,
Until you feel within yourself
A true and wholesome peace.

Randy's Sin.

Dey is had a splutteration
In our choir 'dout a doubt,
Cause dey say Miss Randy Johnsing
Sho' is got to git right out.
Do' she sing de best soprany
'Dout a trimble or a squeak,
Dey's done hearn sich tales about huh
Dat day jist is 'blige to speak.

Brudder Stone de choir leadah,
Could'nt 'cide jist wat to say
When he called de folks togedder
At de chu'ch de other day;
So he argu'd Parson Gravham
Was de one to say de word
Dat would tell Miss Randy Johnsing
'Bout de rumahs we has heard.

Parson Grayham was so nervis,
Didn't know jist how to start;
So he flung a high ferlutin'
Sentence out about de h'art.
Said it war no use o' struttin'
Wid a captivatin' grin
Ef yo' character war dirty
An' yo soul war black wid sin.

Den he 'lowed, "It hu'ts me bredren,
Fo' to say dese words to you ;
But de Bible say, 'Don't falter
When yo' lips am speaking true.'
I'se done brung yo' all togedder
Fo' to tell a sorry tale,
'Tis about de sad misdoin's
Ob a lone and lost she-male.

"Course huh singin' are monstracious
An' huh actions dey is gran'
'Cept she hab one fascinashun
Dat I sho' can't understan'.
Fo' de Lawd she's pow'ful han'some,
But I can't see fo' my life
Why Miss Randv keep a cou'tin'
Wid a man what's got a wife.

"Dey is heaps ob single ge-man,
An' we sho' can't hab de name
Ob our leadin' choir songster
Heapin' up our chu'ch wid shame.
Why I knows some single brudders
Dat would use dey lass'est bref
Fo' to cou't huh ; deed I eben
Lak Mirandy fo' myse'f.

"Now I isn't trying folkses
Fo' to lead yo' people wrong
But de Bible say a preacher
Need a mate to he'p him 'long.
So I'se measured up de sistahs
An' ob all dat I kin see,
I would choose Mirandy Johnsing
Ez de one what ketches me.

“Ez I set dar in de pulpit
Eb’ry blessed Sabbath day,
An’ de folks is all a shoutin’
An’ de organ ’mence to play,
An’ dat captivatin’ Randy
Spread huh mouf an’ sta’t to sing,
I kin heah de tunes a floatin’
Way up ober eb-rything.

“Den my hea’t jist swell wid longin’
But I members whar I’s e at;
You can’t blame no earfly man for
Lovin’ sich a gal ez dat.
Lawd, I most forgot my duty;
Bredren, we will hab to pray
Dat de Lawd will change Miss Randy’s mind
Afore next meetin’ day.

“Cause she’d make a fust class sistah
An’ a charmin’ preacher’s wife;
An’ I speck dat I could lub huh
Fo’ myse’f an’ all my life.
Course dat’s a mighty public speakin’;
I could jist, oh, well, my fren’s,
I could most nigh eat dat ’oman
Praise de blessed Lawd, Amen.”

Penance.

Slowly toward the chapel
Two mortal beings trod ;
The one an earthly sinner,
The one a child of God.
And as they crossed the threshold
The sinner paused awhile ;
"I dare not tread this hallowed ground
And live," he said and smiled.

"Life is an empty bubble
With colors varied wide,
An object that will freely float
With every changeeful tide ;
But taken under ruling,
'Twill bend and yield with ease.
It is for man to choose his path
Between the two of these."

Thus spoke the Christian soldier
And silence reigned supreme.
"Those very words," the sinner cried,
"I heard once in a dream ;
And they have dwelt upon me.
Till now by mortal man
They come to me as clearly
As in the dream they ran !

"Ah! lead me to the altar
That God may hear my prayer;
That I may plead for penance
And choose my pathway there!"
They slowly walked together
Adown the spacious aisle,
The sinner knelt in silence
And weeping all the while.

"Oh, God," his lips had parted,
"If Thou dost reign in Heaven,
Send down Thy light upon the earth
That souls may be forgiven.
Pierce with Thy spirit, my sad heart,
Bring peace unto my soul
That Thy lost sheep may hear Thy call
And find again Thy fold."

The tears were dry upon his cheek,
His eyes were turned to Heaven;
His very frame was changed the while,
His very soul was shriven;
His very face was luminous,
His very breath was sweet;
His Christian friend, so much rejoiced,
Had fallen at his feet.

The bells began to tell the hour,
It was the vesper time;
Two souls that had been troubled
Were filled with joy sublime.
The dying sun had shed it's gloom
Upon the dewy sod;
Two Christian men with hearts aglow
Were whispering, "Thank God."

Music Hath Charms.

When the first grey streaks of morning
Come peeping from the skies,
And all the lovely earthly things
Open their drowsy eyes,
Then let the strains of music,
Like angels' voices, sweet,
Fall gently on my list'ning ear
To make my joy complete.

Hark, I hear a murmur
Like the rippling of a stream ;
A sort of weird harmony
Is the player's chosen theme.
It fills my heart with a feeling
Of strange yet happy glee,
And I laugh in the tender emotion
This music imparts to me.

But now the strains grow heavy ;
My heart begins to beat—
For it seems I hear the pouring
Of torrents in the streets,
And now the thunder rattles,
And I touch my fearful heart
With the strange, yet deep emotion
This music doth impart.

Again the theme is softened,
The tones are cold as death;
They cause a dreadful shiver;
I gaze with bated breath.
It seems that I am beckoned
To a long and lasting sleep;
I bow my head in anguish.
This music bids me weep.

Hark, something more is added
To the rhythm clear and high;
The player's tongue is loosened
She sings a lullaby.
Her heart and soul awoken,
Her accents soar above,
And now I lie a dreaming—
My dream is one of Love.

June.

What month I wonder!
Can you tell?
There's something in it
Answers well.
I hear the cricket's drowsy tune
It seems to whisper, "June, June!"

Only Smile.

Should I tell to you a story,
If I beg one favor dear,
Would you give to me an answer
From your telling eyes, so clear?
I could read what you were thinking
While we two the hours beguile
If you'd look into my face
And only smile.

Only smile when I draw near thee.
Only smile when I caress;
Then my heart would lose its anguish
And would never know distress.
But if once your look should picture
That you had been sad the while,
I could never be content
Unless you'd smile.

An Impression.

To my Favorite Teacher, Dr. W. B. E.

I read my book of mem'ries,
And find still ling'ring there
A sonnet that reminds me
Of a friend that I revere.

That sonnet, though a semblance,
A weak attempt at best,
Pours forth a weakling's candor ;
The *man* supplies the rest.

It runs—"His life is noble ;
His bearing, full of grace ;
I fain would tell the country
He's an honor to his race.

"With accents strangely soothing
And ringlets like the sage,
A wizard he would surely be
Without the wizards age.

"He was my most loved tutor ;
That love will ne'er depart.
For him there is a halo
Encircling my heart."

And I shall prize that sonnet
That lauds the noble man,
Who kindled the ambition
That made me what I am,

Personality.

Come, listen while I tell thee
What my sad heart doth hold—
Deep in its realms of passion,
Yea, deeper in my soul
There dwells a modest damsel ;
'Tis strange to thee, I wot,
Yet, in my heart I cherish her—
Is it a sin—or not?

Long years I've kept my secret ;
'Tis one that's hard to tell.
I've studied it intently
That I might know it well.
There came one day—a vision,
The day was sultry, hot ;
She stood and gazed upon me,
Was it a sin—or not?

Her face was sad, unearthly ;
Her cheeks were pale as death,
She smiled—a stony, pallid smile
She gasped for lack of breath ;
Then straightened to her maiden height,
Her cheeks flushed red and hot ;
“I've come,” she sighed, “to beckon thee.”
Was that a sin—or not?

She spake no more, but sadly turned
And slowly moved away ;
Yet ever and anon she glanced
To where I yet did stay.
Then suddenly she turned again
As if she had forgot
Some most important sentence.
Was that a sin—or not?

Once more her smile smote on me,
“In all my life” she said,
“I have been most ill-fated ;
Those whom I love are dead.
Yet there is one who loves thee
And loves thee well, God wot”
And I am seeking for her,
Is it a sin—or not?

To thee I tell my secret,
’Tis mine alone, and thine.
Wilt give me thy assistance
To seek this love of mine?
’Tis all within thy power
To tread the charmed spot—
I love thee and thou knowest.
Is that a sin—or not?

Du' Quartet.

We's got a dandy quartet,
De best you's eber seed ;
Ike Jackson sings de tenor
An' I, I sings de lead.
Ruf Brown, he yells de barrytune,
Obe Perkins bawls de bass
An' when we stahts to harmonize
We jest alarms de place.

"Way Down In Ole Virginny,"
Is what we lubs to sing ;
Ike Jackson wid his tenor
Kin make dem high notes ring.
Obe Perkins wid his growlin'
Jest almost drowns de song,
An' ef I warn't a leadin' it
Ruf Brown would sho' go wrong.

Cause barrytune is sut'ny
One hard tune fer to sing.
He jest can't 'zactly 'member when
To fling his minahs in—
An' so to stop from breakin' down,
I natchly has to quit
A singin' my own leadin' part
To help him out a bit.

We's got a soft and techin' song,
I sings de solo part.
De fellers gits right jealis when
I steps out front to start.
Obe he jest gibs a hoarse grunt
An' Ike stan's dar an' grin
But how I sings dem verses
It sho'ly are a sin.

Den when I reach de chorus
Dey bust out good an' loud;
De way we makes dem slurs would make
De bigges sinnaah proud.
Dat tenor jest a floatin'
Wid dat barrytune jest right;
An' dat bass an' me a leadin' it,
I tell you 'tis a sight.

We guv a concert at de hall,
'Twas on a Friday night;
We brung ou' gals to hyeah us an'
We sung wid all ou' might.
Mose Jenkins picked de banjo
An' Mike Green he scraped de fiddle;
De stage was lit wid candles
Wid a lantron in de middle.

We was dressed in long Prince Albut's
When we comed out on dat flo'.
Dat 'air audjunce clapped an' whistled
Tell dey couldn't clap no mo'.
Den we sung "De Song ob Freedom,"
We jest set de ole folks wile;
All de winders dey was open
You could hyeah us mos' a mile.

An' dat audjunce clapped an' shouted
Tell I 'clare it war a sin;
An' dey said dem singin' fellus
Had to sing dat song agin.
An' dey kep' us dar a singin'
Tell we natchly had to stop;
Den dey shoved de benches gin de wall
An' had a little hop.

Ev'ybody made a motion,
An' ez I skimmed round de flo'
It wuz den I axed Jemima
Ef she'd let me be huh beau.
An' she nestled close up to me
An' she answered wif a smile,
"I can't answer whilst we's dancin'—
I will answer arterwhile."

Ez we traveled home tixedder
'Neath de starry lights ob Mav,
My ole h'art kep' on a thumpin'
Cause I knowed what she would say.
I jest feels dat I was lucky,—
Mine sho' is one happy lot.
I would tell you but I guess yo
Know de answer dat I got.

The Temptation.

PART I.

Muriel, thy task is o'er—
Long encased in silent tomb
Ne'er heav'nward more the Grail shalt lift;
Thy son Didaeus' uplift hands
Shall make reflection on thy soul
It's strengthening power.

Come thou forth and chasten him
More than e'er he chastened were,
Knowest thou that lurking ever,
Slowly and with vengeful ire,
In the precincts of Montelban
Doth an evil heart aspire
Ruin for thy son, and caldron
Ruin for the Holy Knighthood?

Yet Didaeus, weakest 'mong them,
Daily—nightly—slowly nearer
Unto doom doth sadly hasten.
And the vicious, scheming Kuglor
Knoweth all thy son's misgivings,
Fathoms them with scrutinized fervor,
Summons all his hosts of blaspheme
Who assigned to duty devilish
Haste with laughter cruel, hellish
To the luring of Didaeus
Oh, could ever deed more darkened
Be rejoiced in more by Satan
Than by Kuglor now 'tis lavished
Spectre glare and gesture therewith.

Oh, could ever mortal power
His atrocious homage delve
To the sprites that now he hastens
On to damned duty's perform.

Chief among this army wicked
Dwelleth one of mortal making;
Who possessed of duel nature,
Doth anon with loud repenting
Chide their sinful undertakings;
Doth her evil pray to banish.
But for her no penance standeth
Her decree hath long been spoken.

She it was that when the Saviour,
Laden with Redemption's Sorrows,
Gave Himself to crucifixion,
Bloody sweat and cruel scourging—
She it was, that when in anguish
Bleeding, fainting, sadly smiling
Up to Calvary He staggered—
She it was who burst with laughter,
Vacant, shrieking, demon laughter.
She it was upon whose figure
Did the Saviour look in pity
And in accents soft and solemn—
“Wait thou till I come” did whisper.

Till thou cometh! Gloom and sorrow
Seize upon her earthly spirit.
Vainly doth she smite her bosom,
Vainly doth she beg repentance;
Never shall her heart cease beating,
Never shall she cease repining;

Immortality engendered
In her two-fold heart is grafted.
O'er the earth in suffering silent
Must she wander, resting never :—
Now at good and now at evil,
And the fiendish laugh attend her ;
Kuglor chose to call her Andrey.

Neath his spell with evil lavish
Doth this Andrey fall ill fated,
Smitten with a drowsy longing
After sleep, in which condition
Falleth vice the heir to virtue.
Erstwhile poureth in her bosom
Kuglor's vile satanic sentence :
"Ho, ho, Audrey ! to thy duty !
Thou canst with thy maiden beauty
E'en into thy master's meshes
Lure the king, the weak Didæus."

Half entranced and half awaking
Fain would Audrey strive to banish
From her soul the pangs of evil.
Yet in wrathful, monstrous clutches
Doth the sorcered Kuglor hold her—
Till erstwhile with laughter vacant,
Cheeks aglow and smile enchanting,
Eyes aglare with demon lustre
Doth she go to do his bidding.

PART II.

Near the precincts of Montelban
Where the Holy Grail was nurtured
At the bottom of the mountain
Lay a desert waste and dreary.
Here the monks had chose to worship
For it's solitude and quiet ;
Here they reckoned no temptation
Could usurp their minds angelic.

Yet the ever scheming sorc'rer
Into beds of blooming flowers,
Heliotropes, azahlias, zinnias,
Lillies of the rarest beauty,
Violets in great profusion,
Sweet forget-me-nots and dahlias,
Easter bells and rarest roses
Did transform this monkish wasteland,
And the fragrance strangely soothing,
Delicate and e'er more fragrant
E'en the cloister penetrated
Till at length its moment seeking
Slowly forth Didaeus wandered,
In his hand devinely waving
O'er his head the "Spear of Power."
And the fragrance of the flowers
Smote upon his sacred being.

Farther outward and still farther
Did he wander in the beauty
That around the Mount had centered
And anon he smote his bosom,

Touched his forehead, knit his lashes,
Racked his brain that ne'er had failed him—
Yet no thought was he possessed of
That explained the situation.

Ever more and more enchanting
Grew the roses and the grasses ;
Ever sweeter and more fragrant
Grew the atmosphere about him.
Then from out each gorgeous flower
Rose a maiden fair as morning,
Turned towards Didæus nodding,
Blushing and sublimely smiling
And in ecstasy he halted,
Lifted up his eyes to Heaven
As to supplicate for pardon
'Gainst the folly of his venture.

Ere his lips in prayer had parted
In his vision flashed an image
That no mortal power could picture ;
Clad in garments spotless snowy,
Flowing freely with the breezes ;
Whose free arms and shoulders naked
Were of purest alabaster,
And whose eyes of azure beauty
Struck his heart with wild pulsations
While the flaxen tresses floated
O'er a neck of venal vertu

Suddenly the maiden halted.
Blushing red she stood and trembled.
Timid did she seem and modest
At perceiving near the stranger—

And her bosom heaved in snatches
Like she were in sad excitement,
Till Didaeus, pitying ever,
Faltered and forgot his praying;
Dropped the uplift spear to earthward,
Stood enwrapped and half enchanted.

Quickly as with greedy longing
With a bound sprang Kuglor forward
Seized upon the "Spear of Power,"
Smote with fiendish aim upon him,
Rashly crushed him down, then quickly
Back to desert wasteland dreary
Did transform the fragrant garden.

And Didaeus, sorely moaning,
Writhed and tossed in deadly anguish;
Muttered sentences of chiding
In his spaces of composure.—
Raised his bloodshot eyes to Heaven
And his pallid cheeks grew crimson
And his blue eyes slowly parted.
But the wound excruciating
Pain imparting to its victim
Sent his words like nature's drippings
From the eaves of melting winter.

Loud he sent his cry to Heaven,
Loud did he deplore his folly,
Rolled and tossed and smote his bosom,
Touched the spear wound now intently
And with every heart pulsation
Poured a gory streamlet from him
Till at last o'ercome with fainting

Sank he to the earth exhausted.
And from out the blankness round him
“Till the ‘Foolish Pure One’ cometh
Wait thou”! sound in the vacance.

PART III.

Long Didaeus lay thus wounded,
Long had suffered demon torture—
Every herb the monks had hovered
That tradition held as healing—
Every sacred oil had failed them,
Every poultice, every potion;
Every prayer of imploration
They possessed was sent to Heav’nward
And between each holy sentence
Sounded forth the hollow moaning
That the victim of Misfortune
Earnestly sent up to Heaven.

Meanwhile over hills and valleys—
By the rivers, in the forests,
Through the thickets, o’er the mountains,
Down the slope a youth had wandered.
Beautiful he was and childish;
Sturdy and of dark complexion
As a child by nature tutored;
Noble in the full erection
That his massive limbs supported;
Eagle eyed and eagle featured,
And his head with amber ringlets
Mingled there in vast profusion
Tossing here and there unconscious
Did enhance his youthful beauty
Muscular his arms and brawny;

Graceful every motion of them.
Now he drew his slingshot forward,
Perched himself and true to nature
Pulled the string that ne'er had fouled,
Burst with laughter as to earthward
Fell the wild swan he had aimed for.

Through the valley, sweetly, softly,
Sounded forth a sudden twitter—
From the earth about the stranger
Sprang a thousand blooming flowers
Interspersed with scented grasses,
Cactuses and ferns and mosses
So entwined and so gigantic
That the youth became ecstatic,
Halted and in wonder marvelled
That he had not when he entered
Seen the beauty of the valley.

From the bower wreathed with roses
Of the rarest earthly beauty,
Rose a maiden fair as morning,
Cheeks aglow and lips a quiver
Drooping eyes and flowing tresses ;
Arms of snowy plumpness stretching
Forward to entice the stranger.
And she thus poured forth her bidding
Slowly and with clear precision :

“Percifal, thou ‘Foolish Pure One.’
Thou hast wandered far I reckon—
Thou art beautiful of figure,
Thou art wild and rash in action,
Thou hast lost thy way I vouch thee.
Thou art thoughtless of thy movements.

Yet with all thy strange misgivings
Thou art loved by every mortal.
Come and sit thee down, I pray thee;
Thou art nature's own production—
Bend thyself among her beauties,
Rest thee where her fragrance hovers.
'Tis the realm of conscious spirit
That thou hast this moment entered,
All that wander here are happy.
I have hied me here to lead thee
To the everspouting fountain
Where eternal wisdom floweth;
There to satiate thy bosom
With the happiness essential
To the realm wherein thou livest.

“Thou art culpable and simple,
Thou art not as when I strode here
Hard as adamantyne boulders
Difficult to grasp thy portion
Long assigned before thy coming.
Ah, I see thou art aweary!
Lay thee down and rest and slumber,
Let the zephyrs waft thy tresses
To and fro about thy temples,
Thou art frightened, thou art startled,
Thou art trustless of thy servant.
Pardon if I do offend thee;
There is naught to cause thee horror,
I am happy—why art thou not?
Thou art foolish, youthful stranger—
Fear was never known to enter
Into precincts where such splendor
Has of nature grown and blossomed.”

Suddenly she burst with laughter
Loud and vacant, harsh and grating,
So demonic and so hellish
That the youth in fear engrossing
Turned to flee the sights about him.

Now the air was rent with curses
Violent and madly vicious ;
Through the atmosphere a whizzing
Like a reed by forceful bending
Swung about the head delivers
Permeated loud and awful.

Percival at once bewildered
Halted 'mid the fearful tumult.
Close above his head uncovered
Flashed an object bright and glitt'ring.
Reaching upward without intent
Down he brought the shining trophy ;
To his breast he pressed the treasure,
All the beauty of the valley
Faded as he drew it earthward.
Back again to dreary wasteland
Withered all the fragrant blossoms,
Back again to his dominion
Vanished Kuglor, the enticer ;
Back again to her ill-fated haunts
Did Audrey sink in sorrow
And before the trembling stranger
All aghast with lips that quivered,
Heavy breasts and hearts that fluttered
Stood the pale knights of Montelban.

PART IV.

From the summit of Montelban
Overlooking all the country
Clad in garments dark and somber,
Girded round with belt of granite,
Silently the landscape viewing
Stood the lonely monastery
In the valley far beneath it
Stood the monks in amber cassocks
Clustered round a youthful stranger.

Now the vesper bell was ringing,
Now they smote their heaving bosoms
As they turned and slowly filing
Two and two toward the cloister
Lead the youth who filled with wonder
Had become emasculated.
Through the gates of massive grandeur
Into paths of gravelled beauty,
Under arbors fresh and fragrant,
Over bridges made of nature
Past the ancient arched doorway,
Down the long and spacious hallway
Even into secret chambers
Did they lead the young advent'rer.

Meanwhile through the cloistral stillness
Sounded forth from out the chapel
Pealings from the bulky organ
Calling to the vesper service
All the holy Montelbaners
Who with faces wreathed in sorrow,
Eyes that sadly drooped to earthward,

Hands that trembled as they placed them
Now across their monkish bosoms,
Solemnly their places taking
Slunk away to do their bidding.

Close behind the long procession
Deep enthused in conversation
Walked the eldest monk among them ;
He the querist of the cloister,
He the wisest and the Super—
Father of the Holy Order,
Leading with fraternal hearing
By the hand the youthful stranger.

PART V.

All was splendor in the chapel,
Through the dome of glassy beauty
All the somber shades of sunset
Poured upon the praying brothers.
Percival in admiration
Stood enraptured in the doorway,
On his brow the frown of knowledge,
In his eye the light of wisdom,
On his cheek the blush of childhood,
In his hand the "Spear of Power,"
And the sight he now encountered
Challenged him with admonition.

In the center of the chapel
Stood the seemly marble altar
Deeply fretted with acanthus,
Richly clothed in oriental
Laces of the rarest beauty,
Tastefully adorned with flowers,

Humbly bearing on its bosom
Where the dome light fell in crimson
Stream, the Holy Grail containing
Wine and wafer intermingled.

Deeper fell the shades of evening,
Darker grew the holy chamber
Softly did the strains of music
Melt away in sweet succession ;
From the gloomy dome above them
Suddenly a stream of splendor
Smote upon the holy altar.
There in chasuble of crimson
Stood Didaeus pale and wretched.

Silence reigned throughout the chapel.
All the holy Montelbaners
Knelt in silent prayer about him.
Then in words that told his suff'ring
Thus he spake unto his subjects :
"Brethren of the Holy Knighthood,
'Tis the hour of elevation.
Long have I performed this duty
With a sacred strength from Heaven ;
Long have I in cool composure
Gazed upon you kneeling thusly
Round the Host in sweet devotion ;
Every fiber, every sinew,
Every muscle, e'en the framework
And the flesh that make this body
Have in unison exalted
All our acts of adoration.
Now with basest accusation,
Musings that withal are beastly,

Conscience that would scathe its victim,
Heart depressed with misdirection,
Flesh that shudders at the touching,
Do I find myself confronted.

“Deep the stain of guilt has gored me ;
E’en my weary soul has shrunk
Fearing lest the condemnation
Bear upon it’s depths so vastly
That annihilation sadly
May devour it’s weak existence.

“But to duty. ‘Tis the hour
Of the just and trying ordeal—
Ah, I fear that ere this Chalice
That this arm so strong hath lifted
To its full extent be hoisted
Shall Didæus fall ill-fated
Back to dust from which he cometh.
Pray ye then that though he falter
God will shrive his spotted nature
And at time of elevation
From the cell wherein he dwelleth
He may look upon the scene with
Spectre joy and admiration.”

Suddenly as if by magic
Had he seized upon the Chalice
Braced himself against the altar
And in accents loud and rambling
Prayed for Kuglor, plead for Audrey,
Smiled on all the vile enticers
Who had dragged him to perdition.

Then as if a light from Heaven
Lit his soul with sweet forgiveness
Did his eyes become enkindled
With a calm and beaming brightness,
Slowly and with steady motion
Up he raised the Holy Chalice
Till to shoulders' height he bore it
'Mid the chanting of the brothers
Who the "Credo" now were singing.
Slowly and with steady motion
Down again, he bore the vessel,
Sank into the cushioned sedan
They had placed behind the altar
Grasped the freshly broke contusion,
Trembled as in broken whispers,
"It is meet," he softly muttered;
"It is meet that I should suffer,
It is just that I be chided—
God is good; I be the villian!
Come my brothers, come, I pray thee,
On your chastened arms support me
That before my failing vision
All the scenes of past contentment
May appear in silent splendor."

Ere the monks could do his bidding
From the doorway where the foolish
Percifal had long been watching,
Came a sob of deepest feeling.
All the monks in quick amazement
Turned toward the chapel entrance
And Didaeus, half arising,
Saw the stranger for the first time.

"Ah, I am content," he murmured
Huskily with feeble nodding
Toward the vision in the doorway
"Thou art come, I know thy errand.
'Tis to lift the Grail in splendor
That the sanctity of Heaven
May again pervade the cloister.
Come thou forth, thy task awaits thee,
For this life is slowly ebbing—
Ere the dawn of day shall lighten
Yonder chapel dome with beauty
Shall there be a dead Didæus
Even now the chill o'ertakes me,
Even now my vision darkens,
Even now I long to see thee
Elevate the Grail to Heaven.
Then may I with satisfaction
Die and meet the Galilean
Face to face and hear the judgment
He would deal his weak disciple."

Timidly toward the altar
Percival advanced and halted,
Lifted up his eyes to Heaven,
Locked his hands across his bosom,
Burst in tears and 'mid his sobbing
Prayed to God in broken accents—
Then at once himself composing
Did he grasp with calm decision
In his hands the Sacred Chalice.
With the chant, "Ora pro nobis"
Did the Grail ascend to Heav'nward.
In the glory of the service
Did Didæus' soul expire
And the Holy Montelbaners
Sang aloud in exaltation,
"Alter ipse amicus."

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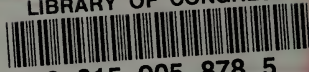
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